

THE POWER OF THE CHURCH IN 1500

As we have seen with our work on the Crusades, the Church was very powerful in Britain. The First Crusade had been called by the Pope, who was the head of the Roman Catholic Church - the religion of the people of Britain in 1500. Many thousands of men had travelled to the Holy Land to fight for their beliefs.

Task 1 *Put the heading in your books “**The Power of the Church in 1500**”. Leave two lines and then write two sentences saying what religion Britain was in 1500 and who the head of the Church was.*

But why was the Church so powerful?

1. It owned land.

The Church owned many large areas of farmland. People who grew crops on this land had to give one tenth of everything they grew to the Church. This was called the Tithe. This was a lot of crops for many poor people to lose.

2. It controlled people's beliefs.

The Church told people that when they died, their souls lived on either in Heaven or in Hell.

Hell, they said, was a place of great pain and suffering. The people were understandably frightened of going there. So, the Church gave them hope. It said that after you die your soul goes first to a place called Purgatory, where it would stay until any sins had been burnt away.

3. It was rich.

As you can imagine. People wanted to be in purgatory for the shortest possible time. The Church said that you could shorten your stay in purgatory if you did several things.

These included:

- Attend Church and live a good life
- Go on a pilgrimage
- Buy a special pardon. These pardons were known as **Indulgences**.

The Church made a lot of money this way, as people - especially rich people - tried to buy their way to heaven. The Church also made money through the Tithes.

4. It was not controlled by the King.

The Church was Roman Catholic and therefore was lead by the Pope. This meant that the King could not tell anyone from the Church what to do. Even if a churchman committed a crime, they could not be tried by a normal court, but instead were tried by fellow churchmen, who were often very lenient.

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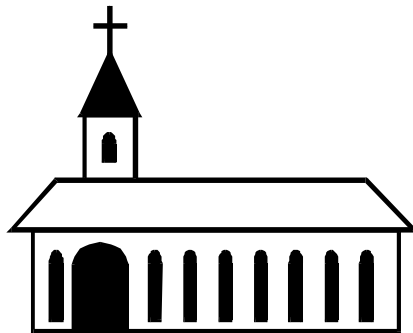
Task 2 *Leave a line from Task 1. Then copy out the frame from below, filling the spaces with the correct answers.*

The Church was very powerful. Its power could be seen in four main ways. These were

[insert here the four ways that the Church was powerful.]

Everyone believed that when they died, they would go to Heaven or Hell. The Church said that before your soul went to Heaven, it first went to **Purgatory**. This was the place where *[insert here a definition of what Purgatory was]*. To shorten the time that people spent in Purgatory, the Church would sell **Indulgences**. These were*[insert here a definition of what Indulgences were]*.

The Church made money in other ways. One way was through the collection of **Tithes**. This was when*[insert here a description of what a Tithe was]*.



Task 3 *Leave a line. Then, in your own words, explain why if you were King of England in 1500 you would dislike the Church. Give at least one reason for each of the 4 ways that the Church was powerful in 1500. Again, answer in full sentences.*